



New England Marine Research Laboratory

IC-83

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Internal Distribution

Date February 5, 1985

To ✓ R. A. McGrath

From D. P. Mason *DPM*

Subject Oil spill in New Bedford Harbor

J. M. Neff

NUS Files

A.P. Graffeo/501 Files

Superfund Records Center

SITE: New Bedford

BREAK: 3.01

OTHER: 46572

On 29 January 1985 at 12:54pm the refuelling barge William H. Bennett was struck by the Norwegian freighter Hidlefjord at the Safe Harbor Seafood Company's pier. This pier is located on the northern edge of North pier, upstream of the Rte. 6 bridge, on the western shore of New Bedford Harbor (see map).

According to Coast Guard Chief Warrant Officer Vern Williams of the Providence Marine Safety Office, the barge was empty at the time of the accident though it contained approximately 3,200 gallons of No. 2 diesel fuel on board for propulsion. Within an hour after the accident, a spill containment boom was in place to prevent loss of oil. During the afternoon, the barge sank and rolled over allowing oil to escape from the boat. While sinking, the boat also disrupted the containment boom and allowed some oil to escape into the harbor. Most of the oil leaked from the boat between 4-5 PM. A clean-up crew was on the scene between 5-5:30PM, installed another containment boom, and pumped 700 gallons of oil from the water. On Saturday, 2 February 1985, the barge was raised and 2,200 gallons of oil were pumped from its fuel tank. The barge will be hauled from the water at D. N. Kelley's on Wednesday, 6 February 1985.

High tide on 29 January was at 1:55PM so oil that spilled on impact probably did not travel too far before the first containment boom was in place. However, when most of the oil leaked from the barge (4-5PM) it was carried into the harbor by an outgoing tide.

Due to the immiscibility, low density, and low volume of oil that was lost, we will probably not see detectable amounts of contamination at our sediment stations. Water and biota samples will also be unaffected since tidal action will flush the oil from the harbor. The stations that may be affected will be 4 and 5.

The exact route of the spilled oil is unknown since much of the shoreline is ice covered and the time when most of the oil escaped was near sunset. The Coast Guard has not received any reports of shoreline contamination or visible pockets of oil therefore, we can assume that any lost oil has dissipated and will probably not cause analytical problems in the future.

Sharon Kristofferson, of NOAA's pollution response team, will be sending me a preliminary report describing her observations at the scene.

distance finding station  
F D existence doubtful

with additions  
Navy

NEW BEDFORD HARBOR CHANNEL DEPTHS							
Tabulated from surveys by the Corps of Engineers - report to Jan. 1972 and surveys to May 1972							
Controlling depths in channels entering from seaward in feet at Mean Low Water					Project Dimensions		
Name of Channel	Left outside quarter	Middle half of channel	Right outside quarter	Date of Survey	Width (feet)	Length (naut. miles)	Depth M.L.W. (feet)
Entrance Channel	27.9	30.0	29.0	5-71	350	2.3	30
Ft. Phoenix Reach	27.4	29.5	29.0	5-71	350	1.5	30
New Bedford Reach	28.5	28.8	28.0	9,10-69	350 to 400	0.7	30

Note.-The Corps of Engineers should be consulted for changing conditions subsequent to the above.

